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AUTHOR Bleich, Russell M.
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ABSTRACT

Exact delineation of the duties and obligations of Catholic educators in the development of religious growth in their pupils is set forth. Teaching methods and instructional aids are suggested, and the role of the teacher as a spiritual guide is explored. Responsibility for moral instruction is delegated to parents and to the community as well as to the formal educational facility. Quotations from the Bible and from Vatican Declarations are utilized to substantiate the main points of the speech. (IH)

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Salt, Light & Leaven!? SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF TEACHERS

by

Rev. Russell M. Bleich

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National Catholic Education Association
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Salt, Light & Leaven!? SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF TEACHERS

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Rev. Russell M. Bleich

Teachers in Catholic education are called by Christ to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world; truly sharing the light of faith. Spiritual formation is the indispensable ingredient in the Catholic school for the achievement of its fundamental mission of bringing the people to Christ through the integration of faith with life and faith with culture. There is an openness and hunger for spiritual growth among Catholic school teachers. The Document on Evangelization says, "People today listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." The Vatican document on The Catholic School says, "It is indispensable to insure the continuing formation of Catholic school teachers through some form of suitable pastoral provision."

The task of Christian formation of teachers focuses on the following topics: Present pastoral situation, presuppositions about spiritual growth, vision and expectations of the Christian teacher, implications for comprehensive distinctive personnel policies, formation program strategies and models, suggestions as to who in the Church are responsible for developing and offering "suitable pastoral provisions", teacher responsibilities, the role of leadership in the local community, current developments around the country, emerging issues and reasons for hope.

National Catholic Education Association
Philadelphia - 1979

Salt, Light & Leaven!? SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF TEACHERS

I. Introduction

A. Gospel Matthew 5:13-16, You are the light of the world, salt of the earth.

B. Theme: Sharing the Light of Faith

1. On Evangelization, "People today listen to witnesses more than they do to teachers and, if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."

2. People are filled by faith - by being inspired and influenced - by other faith-filled people.

C. Vocation/Ministry

1. In an informal way: all baptized - especially parents

2. Some people are called by God and the community to teach formally in programs sponsored by the community.

3. Frequently this ministry or office is publicly recognized by commissioning ceremonies.

4. The teacher is a public person within the community who serves in the name of the community.

5. Christian witness in private and professional life is necessary qualification for a Christian teacher.

D. Mission

1. The teacher contributes to the Catholic school which forms a part of the saving mission of the Church which is to lead all to Christ and through Him to the Father by the power of the Spirit.

2. The teacher shares the role of guiding individuals to respond to God's call -
   to personal conversion
   to Christian community
   to the transformation of society.

3. The teacher does this through the sharing of culture and knowledge enlightened and enlivened by faith.

E. Acknowledge stirrings of hunger for spiritual growth among teachers.

Topic of great interest and urgency to Catholic educators today.

F. Thesis: Spiritual formation of teachers is the indispensable ingredient in the Catholic school for the achievement of its fundamental mission of bringing the people to Christ through the integration of faith with life and faith with culture.

G. What is spiritual formation?

1. This talk is an overview of the important topics and issues, as I see them.

2. Description: A life-long process - of deepening our experience of -
   the friendship of Jesus;
   the love of the Father, and
   the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. The strengthening of our personal relationship with the Lord enables us to be more fully -
   servants as Jesus was;
   a community centered on Jesus;
   witnesses and heralds of the message of Jesus.

4. Distinctions
   a. Professional formation - good teacher
   b. Spiritual formation - disciple of Jesus
   c. Ministerial formation - special training to utilize professional competencies to build up the body of Christ - Christian teacher
   d. We need all three - primary focus of this talk on spiritual formation.

H. Who are teachers?

1. Parents are primary teachers. Most everything in talk about teaches applies especially to parents.

2. Adult believing community - GCD Evangelization (witnessing community) - Much of what is said about teacher formation applies to all.

3. Our focus today on school staff, especially teachers and administrators. It doesn't all rest on teachers.

II. The Pastoral Situation

A. Our mission and ministry

1. Call of Jesus to go teach by word and deed

2. Faced with a culture and society that does not teach and act in a gospel way

3. The purpose and mission of the Catholic school is to share and contribute to the salvific mission of the Church.

B. Expectations of teachers in a Catholic school

1. By the Church

a. Vatican II: Dec. on Educ., Par. #8

"But let teachers realize that to the greatest possible extent they determine whether the Catholic school can bring its goals and undertakings to fruition. They should, therefore, be trained with particular care so that they may be enriched with both secular and religious knowledge, appropriately certified and may be equipped with an educational skill which reflects modern-day findings bound by charity to one another and to their students and penetrated by an apostolic spirit, let them give witness to Christ, the unique Teacher, by their lives as well as by their teachings."

b. The Catholic School, #43

"The achievement of this specific aim of the Catholic school depends not so much on subject matter or methodology as on the people who work there. The extent to which the Christian message is transmitted through education depends to a very great extent on the teachers. The integration of culture and faith is mediated by the other integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher. The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ, the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behavior. This is what makes the difference between a school whose education is permeated by the Christian spirit and one in which religion is only regarded as an academic subject like any other."

c. To Teach As Jesus Did, Par. #104

"This integration of religious truth and values with the rest of life is brought about in the Catholic school not only by its unique curriculum but, more important, by the presence of teachers who express an integrated approach to learning and living in their private and professional lives."

d. On Evangelization, #41

"People today listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."

2. Parents assume teachers are formed, are faith-filled, know the teachings of the Church, are persons of prayer, set a Christian example for the children.

3. Boards and administrators desire teachers to be formed and expect them to be open to ongoing formation.

4. Teachers are at all stages of awareness, acceptance and openness toward viewing ongoing Christian formation as a bona fide qualification for employment as a teacher.

C. Christian formation of teachers in days gone by

1. Seminaries and novitiates

2. Catholic college religious requirements

D. Now where?

1. For priests and religious (currently one-third of our staffs) - renewed formation programs in seminaries and religious congregations

2. Lay teachers - what, where, when, how, by whom?

III. Presuppositions about Spiritual Growth

A. Spiritual growth both a gift and an accomplishment (like walking on stilts, we need both)

1. God calls and gifts us

2. Our response is free and necessary for growth

B. God's desire to gift us with spiritual life and growth precedes and is greater than our desire to receive it.

C. We can and should prepare ourselves in the circumstances of our lives to receive and nurture the life and growth given to us by God.

1. Dispose ourselves

III. C. 2. Like Iowa farmer preparing and cultivating the land

3. Create the conditions of possibility

D. In God's plan, we are to be a significant part of preparing for and nurturing the spiritual life in one another

E. God cannot be manipulated or managed - our programs are merely efforts to prepare for and cooperate with His initiatives. His gifting is personal, mysterious, providential, and according to His own timing. Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father draw him."

F. Prayer is essential. The Father has taught us to pray for His gifts. "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened."

G. The fact of the presence or absence of spiritual life and growth can never be known or demonstrated with certainty. True spiritual life reveals itself in the love of God and fellowman in both words and deeds. It is possible for a person to role-play words and deeds at least over a short period of time. External behaviors may cautiously be considered as indicators of spiritual life and growth which is essentially an internal matter. "Grant to us O Lord a heart renewed. Recreate in us your own spirit Lord."

IV. Vision and Expectation of the Christian Teacher

A. Vision

1. Vocation/Ministry - referred to at the beginning

2. Mission - referred to at the beginning

3. Commitment to Growth

a. Openness to growth and development is an expected way of life for our teachers.

b. This is also true of our baptismal, Confirmation and Eucharistic commitments as Christians.

c. All teachers are facilitators of growth. Christian teachers are als faciltators of faith growth/experience.

d. This necessitates programs of pre-service and in-service Christian spiritual and ministerial formation.

IV. A. 4. **A Description of the Ideal Teacher**

a. **A visionary who embraces the mission and goal of the educational ministry.**

b. **A person with a commitment to spiritual growth for self and others.**

c. **A person whose faith in prayer is living, conscious and active and integrated into private and professional life.**

d. **A builder of Christian community within and beyond the local educational setting.**

e. **A proclaimer of the Christian message by word and deed.**

f. **A servant offering personal and professional abilities and compentencies.**

g. **One who respects and celebrates life from a religious perspective**

h. **One who strives to teach and to live Christian values.**

i. **A person who is a competent, professional educator.**

j. **One who shares culture and knowledge enlightened and enlivened by faith.**

B. Program Objectives

1. To employ and develop Christian educators with knowledge and understanding (vg. Basic Teachings of Catholic Education, Major Themes of Vatican II, Overview of Church's Documents Related to Education, Principles of Maturity and Human and Spiritual Growth, An Overview of the Church's Social teachings and Justice and Peace, An Introduction to a Variety of Prayer Forms, The Teachings of Scriptures in the Church in the areas of the curriculum for which they are responsible) - Parents who send their children to us assume we know these things.

2. To enable educators to be and to become persons with Christian attitudes and qualities (credit NCEA Qualities and Competencies Document)
   a. A person of faith
   b. A witness to the gospel
   c. A witness to the Church
   d. A proclaimer of the message
   e. A sharer of fellowship in the spirit
   f. A servant of the community
   g. A capable, professional educator

3. To develop those competencies and skills which enable educators to perform the tasks which result in desired student learning.
   a. Competencies as facilitators of faith experience(vg. contributes to a student's sense of self-worth, contributes to the building of a community of faith, guides students in effecting respect, love, and reconciliation in community, provides opportunity for students to participate in prayer, guides students to freely develop value system based on the gospel and Christian tradition.)
   b. Competencies as facilitator of the learning process.

V. Implications for Distinctive Personnel Policies (reflecteded also in faculty handbooks and contracts)

A. Description of desirable ideals, qualities and competencies

B. Personnel planning

C. Recruitment and selection

D. Induction and orientation

E. Development and in-service

F. Contracts/agreements and handbooks

G. Compensation

H. Evaluation and appraisal

I. Due process

VI. Program Strategies and Models

A. Course of action for procuring new personnel with Christian preparation.

1. Describe in clear, brief fashion the qualification, understandings, attitudes and competencies desired in educational personnel.
2. Acquaint colleges with the description of the type of personnel desired.
3. Identify existing and potential pre-service programs that could be modified to provide the type of training desired -- acquaint and encourage them to modify their programs accordingly.
4. Co-sponsor and collaborate with colleges to provide the type of pre-service training desired.
5. Develop and utilize supplemental components to existing college pre-service programs and require them as prerequisites for employment.

VI. A. 6. Identify, persuade, encourage and support individuals with appropriate motivation, interest and abilities to enter college pre-service programs as Christian teachers.

7. Obviously, include a concern for pre-service Christian formation among the recruitment, interview and selection processes and practives.

B. Development of present personnel: appropriate in-service models for adult learning.

1. Design all programs to meet cognitive, affective and competency objectives mentioned above (v.g. video tape more suitable for cognitive objectives).
2. Adult motivation imperative - based on perceived, personal needs and needs related to their role as Christian teachers in Catholic schools.
3. Secure involvement and participation before, during and after the program.
4. They must share in making decisions - what they need now and what they need next. (Priorities)
5. They should help design and sponsor the program.
6. There should be a wide variety of programs to accommodate for individual differences, learning styles, etc. - provide options to be freely chosen (but require a choice).
7. Duration could vary in length from a portion of a faculty meeting to a six-weeks summer session - at a school site, a retreat house, a home or anywhere suitable. The adults should be involved in choosing the resource persons and materials.
8. Peer ministry - adults learn best from each other.
9. Adults learn effectively by reflecting on their experience.
10. Search for appropriate style of spirituality for vocation in life (for religious, for lay).
11. Be sensitive to the legitimate, theological and ascetical pluralism, (not everyone seems called to spontaneous shared prayer).
12. Be realistic and patient -- take next reasonable steps.
13. Beware of shortcuts -- over-simplification, indoctrination.
14. The rite of Christian initiation for adults has much to suggest for the Christian formation of adults.

VII. Partners in Developing and Sponsoring "Suitable Pastoral Provisions" For Christian Formation of Teachers?

A. The Catholic School: "Pastoral Care of Teachers", Par. #78

"By their witness and their behavior teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is, therefore, indispensable to ensure their continuing formation through some form of suitable pastoral provision. This must aim to animate them as witnesses of Christ in the classroom and tackle the problems of their particular apostolate, especially regarding a Christian vision of the world and of education, problems also connected with the art of teaching in accordance with the principles

VII. There is a lot going on already, but -----

B. Diocesan Pastoral Minister - Assumed

1. A wide variety of spiritual renewal programs sponsored regularly.

2. Spiritual renewal places/centers (houses of prayer, retreat houses, etc.)

C. Diocesan and Local Educational Systems

1. Insist on need for ongoing Christian formation
   a. With local community leaderships
      1) Comprehensive distinctive personnel policy
      2) Time priority
      3) Budget consideration
   b. With all educators in system

2. Provide or arrange for ongoing in-service formation programs
   a. In collaboration with colleges
   b. Sponsor weekends, overnights, days, extended faculty meetings

3. Sponsor pre-service orientation week/weekend

4. Provide video tape and audio tape libraries on cognitive topics

D. Parishes - Good Eucharistic Liturgies and Annual Programs on Spiritual Formation for Parishioners

E. Colleges and Universities

1. A general formation course for undergraduates on "Ministry in the Church."

2. A specific course on the teaching mission in the Church today.

3. A course on the social teachings of the Church (as a constituentive dimension of the Gospel).

4. A general course in theology, scripture and Christian life style.

5. Christian formation experience programs for all students.

6. A specific formation experience designed for future Catholic educators

F. Religious Congregations

1. Special spiritual renewal centers/houses of prayer - renewal

2. Spiritual renewal opportunities regularly available

3. Special spiritual renewal weekends for teachers

4. Prayer - reflection - action groups

5. Special spiritual activities and projects

VIII. Teacher Responsibilities

A. A commitment to a personal program of spiritual growth.

B. Grows through regular participation and Eucharistic celebrations

C. Participates in regular parish programs of spiritual renewal

D. Occasionally participates in diocesan or other special opportunities for spiritual growth vg. retreats, renewal days, experience weekends, etc. (specially those designed for educators).

IX. The Role of the Educational Leadership in the Local Community

A. Follow the Leader - the Holy Spirit. His wats are beyond our ways. It is God's work - be docile and flexible.

B. Continue to articulate the ideals and foster an awareness of the vision of our spiritual growth who is Christ, the Teacher.

C. Motivation of staff and the leaders most critical challenge

1. Invitation/expectation equals love
   a. Be clear (not vague or ambiguous)
   b. Be gentle
   c. Be valuing - encouraging - supporting - enthusiastic

2. Freedom/acceptance equals love
   a. Patience
   b. Faithful
   c. Forgiving
   d. Beware of indoctrination
   e. Foster internalization

3. Lead teachers to perceive need for spiritual renewal personally and for the good of the school. Gain agreement and endorsement of the staff for priority of Christian formation (begin with core leaders, opinion setters, and legitimizers in the community). Don't get hung up on semantics - call it be anyother name (vg. lonliness).

4. Start where they are and lead them from there.

D. Respect/Reverence

1. Uniqueness of individual

2. Personal nature of God's invitation and our response

3. Expect individuals to grow at different paces, styles and orientations
   a. Pluralism of theological and ascetical orientations
   b. Style of spirituality suited to vocation (lay life, religious life)

4. Be patient - conversion and growth take time

E. Be an advocate of opportunities

1. At home and in family

2. At school

3. In the parish

4. Diocesan sponsored renewal programs

5. Opportunities provided by religious congregations

6. Specific renewal opportunities for educators

7. Identify appropriate models for individuals on staff (v.g. Marriage Encounters, retreats for single persons, etc.)

8. Everything doesn't have to be sponsored by the school or located at the school.

F. Facilitate participation and involvement of teachers in program planning, implementation and evaluation to meet perceived needs

G. Provide resources adequately and fairly

1. Time (personal/school)

2. Finances - budget (personal/school)

H. Be a person of hope for the new creation

1. Model the struggle

2. Pray for your people

3. Recognize effort

4. Affirm - goodness

5. Accept momentary setbacks

6. Heb. 12:1-13 "Let us run with patience to the struggle set before us. To brace up the hands that hang down, to strengthen the tottering knees, and to look towards the author and perfector of faith -- JESUS."

I. Recruit and screen incoming teachers well-gaining openness and commitment to ongoing spiritual growth

J. Advocate both individual and community spiritual growth and facilitate dialogue and inter-action between them

K. Be concerned about spiritual opportunities for spouses of married staff members

L. Facilitate a "welcome" atmosphere between teachers and priests

M. Share and assist the larger parish community in their responsibity to witness the vision of the Gospel to the school - community

N. Keep the necessary personal supervision and evaluation of the Christian formation program at the lowest possible profile

O. We are all sinners and the community will need a bias toward forgiveness and reconciliation

X. Current Developments Around the Country

A. CACE Priority

B. Findings of CACE Committee charied by Sr. Marian McCarthy

1. There is significant activity and exploration

2. NCDRE booklet - "Hear the Word, Share the Word, Guide Your People"

3. Currently programs fall these categories
   a. Central Office Services (v.g. Boston, Calgary, Hartford, St. Petersburg, Dubuque)
   b. Additonal pastoral ministers to serve faculty and students (Youngstown, Ohio)
   c. Resource materials (Green Bay, Dubuque)
   d. Religious congregations: Renewal experiences for teachers & others

XI. Emerging Issues

A. An awareness and articulation of vision and expectations for Christian teachers

B. Readiness, motivation and perceived/felt needs of teachers

C. Appropriate tension between invitation and expectation (voluntary versus required)

D. The mystery of grace and the freedom of man's response (not a mere human program)

E. Respecting individual differences and styles of spirituality in a pluralistic

F. Whose responsiblity is it to provide what programs of Christian formation? Colleges? Dioceses? Congregations? Local Schools?

G. How do you work with beginning teachers and veteran teachers all at the same time?

H. How do we articulate minimum standards without developing a criteria for excommunication? (Scandal? Indifference?)

I. How do we supervise and evaluate without fostering an orientation to externals?

J. How do we pursue our First Amendment rights in affirming that the private, as well as the professional, lives of teachers are bona fide qualification for their employment?

XII. Reasons for Hope

A. Christ called us the light of the world and the salt of the earth

B. He has promised to give us "the finest wheat" and "honey from the rock"

C. It may all seem very challenging especially when we experience our weakness and powerlessness

D. Our hope is not in our own efforts but in Christ

E. As the bishops said in To Teach As Jesus Did -

> "We face problems; so did those who came before us, and those who will follow. But as Christians we are confident of ultimate success, trusting not in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ, who is at once the inspiration, the content, and the goal of Christian education: 'the way, the truth, and the life.'"

National Catholic Education Association
Philadelphia - 1979

Salt, Light & Leaven!? SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF TEACHERS

I. INTRODUCTION

One day Jesus said to His disciples, "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world." He asked his followers to share the light of faith and go teach. It is God's way that people are to come to the faith by being inspired and influenced by other faith-filled people. Pope Paul VI in the document On Evangelization says, "People today listen to witnesses more than they do to teachers and, if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."

Vocation

The Christian teacher has a special vocation and mission in sharing the light of faith. It is true that all who are baptized share in the vocation to teach, at least in an informal way. Parents have the wonderful opportunity and the primary responsibility as teachers of their children. Much of their teaching is done in an informal way.

Some people are called by God in the community to teach in a formal way in programs sponsored by the community. Frequently this ministry or office of teaching is publicly recognized by commissioning ceremonies. Truly the teacher is a public person within the community who serves in the name of the community and of the parents. This makes Christian witness in private and professional life an integral qualification for a Christian teacher.

Mission

The teacher not only has a vocation, but also a mission. It is the same as the mission of the Christian home, the Catholic Church and the Catholic school, which is to lead all to Jesus Christ and through Him to the Father by the power of the Spirit. In this mission the teacher shares in the role of guiding individuals to respond to God's call, to personal conversion, to Christian community and to the transformation of society. As an educator, the teacher does this in a special way through the sharing of culture and knowledge enlightened and enlivened by faith.

Please understand, this high calling from Our Lord Himself in this important mission among the people pertains to all teachers in a Catholic school. Recent Church documents are amply clear on this point. To hold that this calling and mission is reserved only to the religion teacher would be a gross distortion and a denial of basic dignity of all Catholic teachers.

Teacher Interest in Spiritual Growth

As teachers realize their call to mission, they come to know more deeply their need for spiritual development. It is a cause of joy to look about today and see a tremendous interest and urgency on the part of Catholic teachers in their own spiritual growth and development. Truly the Holy Spirit has once again created a hunger in our land. These fine teachers deserve our best efforts in designing and developing spiritual formation opportunities which match their hunger.

The thoughts in this talk are based on the premise that the spiritual formation of teachers is the indispensable ingredient if the Catholic school is to achieve its fundamental mission of bringing people to Christ through the integration of faith with life and faith with culture. I will try to present an overview of the important topics and issues as I see them.

What is Spiritual Formation

But what do we mean by spiritual formation? For the purposes of this talk we mean a lifelong process of deepening our experience of the friendship of Jesus, the love of the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit. This strengthening of our personal relationship with the Lord enables us to be more fully servants as Jesus was, a community centered on Jesus, and witnesses and heralds of the message of Jesus Christ.

For the purposes of clarity we make a distinction between professional formation, spiritual formation and ministerial formation. The outcome of professional formation is a good teacher. The outcome of spiritual formation is a disciple of Jesus. The outcome of ministerial formation is one with special training to utilize educational compentencies for building up the body of Christ. In a sense, ministerial formation includes both professional formation and spiritual formation. We affirm the need for all three. The primary focus of this talk, however, will be on the spiritual formation of teachers.

By teachers we mean those who staff our formal educational programs, primarily professional teachers and administrators. In saying that we do not in any way diminish the fact that parents are the primary teachers of their children and that the adult believing community also has responsibility for the teaching of its members. Much of what we have to say about spiritual formation applies to others in the community, as well as to teachers.

II. OUR PASTORAL SITUATION

Conscious of our call from Jesus to go teach by word and deed, we are faced with a culture and society that does not teach and act in a gospel way. The purpose and mission of the Catholic school is to contribute to the salvific mission of the Church among the people. In light of this, what expectations does the Church have of its teachers?

Assumptions Vary

Parents assume that teachers are formed, are faith-filled, know the teachings of the Church, are persons of prayer, and set an example for their children. The Church's expectations are clearly stated in recent documents. The Declaration on Christian Education from the Second Vatican Council says:

> "But let teachers realize that to the greatest possible extent they determine whether the Catholic school can bring its goals and undertakings to fruition. They should, therefore, be trained with particular care so that they may be enriched with both secular and religious knowledge, appropriately certified and may be equipped with an educational skill which

> reflects modern-day findings bound by charity to one another and to their students and penetrated by an apostolic spirit, let them give witness to Christ, the unique Teacher, by their lives as well as by their teachings." (Par. # 8)

We read in the Vatican document on The Catholic School the following:

> "The achievement of this specific aim of the Catholic school depends not so much on subject matter or methodology as on the people who work there. The extent to which the Christian message is transmitted through education depends to a very great extent on the teachers. The integration of culture and faith is mediated by the other integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher. The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ, the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behavior. This is what makes the difference between a school whose education is permeated by the Christian spirit and one in which religion in only regarded as an academic subject like any other." (#43)

In their pastoral letter To Teach As Jesus Did the American Bishops affirm:

> "This integration of religious truth and values with the rest of life is brought about in the Catholic school not only by its unique curriculum but, more important, by the presence of teachers who express an integrated approach to learning and living in their private and professional lives." (#104)

Paul VI in his exhortation On Evangelization states:

> "People today listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." (#41)

Boards and administrators desire teachers who are formed and they expect them to be open to ongoing Christian formation. Currently such concerns are an integral part of the recruitment and screening process.

Meanwhile, teachers are at all stages of awareness, acceptance and openness toward ongoing Christian formation as a bona fide qualification for employment as a Catholic scho teacher. Some are eager, most are open to follow the invitation and guidance of their leaders. It is also true that there are some who are hesitant and fearful. A few object, "My Christian formation is none of your damn business."

Times Have Changed

As you know in days gone by most teachers in Catholic schools were priests and religious. Their pre-service and in-service Christian formation was provided by seminaries, novitiates, religious congregations and dioceses. The times have changed. Currently religious and priests comprise less than one-third of our teaching staff. We are extremely grateful for their presence among us. They are truly a leaven in the community.

In the present day how will we provide for our lay teachers? What are realistic expectations for them? What kinds of programs should be designed, by whom? Who should be responsible? When should they be offered? How shall they be supported? All these questions arise in the current pastoral situation in which we find ourselves.

III. PRESUPPOSITIONS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Lest there be some misunderstanding, let me state some presuppositions about spiritual growth. We are not advocating a kind of neo-pelagianism.

We affirm that spiritual growth is both a gift and an accomplishment. God calls and gifts us. Our response is free and necessary for growth. It is like walking on stilts, we need both God's gift and our efforts. God's desire to gift us with spritual life and growth precedes and is greater than our desire to receive it.

We can and should prepare ourselves to receive and nurture the life and growth given us by God. Sometimes we refer to this as preparing ourselves or disposing ourselves. It is like the Iowa farmer who prepares both the land and the seed, but it is God who gives life to the seed, growth to the plant and fruit for the farmer.

In God's plan, we are to be a significant part of preparing for and nuturing the spiritual life of one another. One of the greatest sources of our own personal growth is through our efforts to nurture the growth of others. Hence, in a Catholic school, teachers grow as they serve children. Teachers also grow as they foster the spiritual growth of other teachers.

God cannot be manipulated or managed. Our programs are merely efforts to prepare for and cooperate with His initiatives. His "gifting" is personal, mysterious, providential, and according to His own timing. Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father draws him."

Prayer is essential. The Father has taught us how to pray for His gifts. "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

The "fact" of the presence, or absence, of spiritual life and growth can never be known or demonstrated with certainty. True spiritual life reveals itself in the love of God and fellowman in both words and deeds. It is possible for a person to role-play words and deeds, at least over a short period of time. External behaviors must be considered cautiously as indicators of spiritual life and growth which is essentially an internal matter. "Grant to us, O Lord, a heart renewed. Recreate in us your own spirit Lord."

IV. VISION AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

As stated earlier, a teacher is one who has a special vocation and mission intimately related with Jesus and his action to bring about the kingdom of God here and now and for all eternity. Teachers teaching in formal programs sponsored by the parents and the community are both public persons and servants of the community. For this important vocation Christian witness is an integral qualification.

Commitment to Growth

It follows then, that openness and commitment to personal growth and development are an expected way of life for our teachers. Though we especially expect that teachers in their public ministry will be committed to growth, all of us are called to Christian growth by our baptismal, confirmation and eucharistic commitment. Teachers have the special ministry, however, of being facilitators of growth for others - for their students and for each other. This creates an expectation and need for programs of pre-service and in-service for the spiritual and ministerial formation of teachers.

The Ideal Teacher

What is our vision of the ideal teacher? Jesus, is of course, the ideal. But how can we be more specific in order to develop suitable programs for Christian growth? Believing that the spirit of Christ lives in his teachers, we surveyed the educators of our educational system and asked them to describe their vision of the ideal teacher. The response was inspiring and awesome. This project revealed the high ideals and the lofty vision of our teachers. With difficulty we have synthesized their insights into the following list of descriptors. The ideal Christian teacher is one who:

1. Is a person with faith and vision who embraces the mission and goal of the educational ministry.
2. Is a person with a commitment to spiritual growth for self and others.
3. Is a person whose faith in prayer is living, conscious and active and integrated into his/her private and professional life.
4. Is a builder of Christian community within and beyond the local educational setting.
5. Is a proclaimer of the Christian message by word and deed.
6. Is a servant offering personal and professional abilities and competencies.
7. Respects and celebrates life from a religious perspective.
8. Strives to teach and to live Christian values.
9. Is a competent, professional educator.
10. Shares culture and knowledge enlightened and enlivened by faith.

Program Objectives

In analyzing these descriptors we see that programs of spiritual formation must take into account three different kinds of objectives: cognitive, affective and competency.

Our objectives then would have to promote Christian knowledge and understanding. For example, the themes of Vatican II, the principles of human and spiritual growth, the social teachings of the Church, prayer forms, etc.

A second objective would foster Christian attitudes and qualities. For example, faith, prayer, witness, herald, servant, etc.

A third objective would develop those competencies and skills which enable the teacher to be a facilitator of both the faith experience and the learning process.

V. IMPLICATIONS FOR DISTINCTIVE PERSONNEL POLICIES

"Okay", you say, "The vision is great, but how do we bring it to reality?" Let's use our professional training and know-how. We can't leave this at the level of vague conviction. We need to translate it into the institutional fabric of the school. For example, it should be reflected in comprehensive distinctive personnel policies, faculty handbooks, and teacher contracts. Items to be included in a personnel policy would be:

1. A description of the desirable ideals, qualities and competencies
2. Personnel planning
3. Recuritment/Selecting
4. Induction and orientation
5. Development and in-service
6. Contracts/agreements and handbooks
7. Compensation
8. Evaluation and appraisal
9. Due process

VI. PROGRAM STRATEGIES & MODELS

We will need special programs for both new personnel entering our system and for the development of present personnel.

New Teachers

We need to acquaint colleges and other potential sources of new personnel with a description of the type of person desired. A survey of college programs will identify both existing and potential pre-service programs that could be adapted to provide the type of training desired. Ongoing dialogue with colleges are needed to acquaint and encourage them to modify their programs accordingly. We need to be open to co-sponsoring and collaborating with colleges to assist them in providing the desired pre-service programs. When colleges are unable (or unwilling) to adapt their programs, we will need to develop and utilize supplemental components to college pre-service programs requiring them as a prerequisite for employment.

Perhaps we ought not limit ourselves to those already in colleges. Let us take the initiative to identify youth suited for the educational ministry. Let us encourage them for entrance into college programs for Christian education.

Obviously, we include this concern for pre-service Christian formation among the recruitment, interview and selection processes and practices.

Teachers Already on the Staff

Present personnel need appropriate in-service suited to their experience. The programs we design will need to foster the cognitive, affective and competency objectives mentional earlier. Individual programs may have particular focus and emphasis. For example, video tape presentations may be suitable for cognitive objectives.

Motivation: Perceived Need-Involvement-Options

Proper motivation is imperative. Growth will more likely occur when teachers perceive the formation program as a response to personal needs or related to their role as Christian teachers in a Catholic school. To secure adult commitment, involvement and participation of teachers is necessary before, during and after the program. They must share in making decisions concerning what they need now and what they need next. They must be involved in designing and sponsoring a program of peer ministry in which they learn from one another and by reflecting together on their experience. A wide variety of programs will be needed to accommodate the individual differences, learning styles, family responsibilities, etc. The programs might vary from a portion of a faculty meeting for a group to a six weeks summer session at a school site, a retreat house, a home, or any other suitable place for individuals who chose that option.

There is a need to be sensitive to legitimate, theological and ascentical pluralism. We need to search for appropriate styles of spirituality for vocations in life, for religious, for lay. We need to assist persons in growth in prayer providing a variety of prayer types and experiences. We need to be realistic and patient, taking next reasonable steps avoiding shortcuts such as over-simplification and indoctrination. The rite of Christian initiation for adults has much to suggest for the Christian formation of adults.

VII. PARTNERS IN DEVELOPING AND SPONSORING "SUITABLE PASTORAL PROVISIONS" TO CHRISTIAN FORMATION OF TEACHERS?

The Vatican document The Catholic School says,

> "By their witness and their behavior teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is, therefore, indispensable to ensure their continuing formation through some form of suitable pastoral provision. This must aim to animate them as witnesses of Christ in the classroom and tackle the problems of their particular apostolate, especially regarding a Christian vision of the world and of education, problems also connected with the art of teaching in accordance with the principles of the Gospel." (#78)

The good news is that there are a great number of spiritual formation programs already going. We need to survey them and to make these opportunities known to our teachers. The bad news is that there are not enough Christian formation programs to meet the needs of our teachers. We need to get involved in the development and sponsorship of these programs and encourage others to be partners with us.

It can be assumed that numerous and varied spiritual growth opportunities are available through the regular pastoral ministry of the diocese. These opportunities for spiritual renewal are no doubt sponsored with some regularity. It can also be assumed that there are spiritual renewal centers, retreat houses, houses of prayer and so forth within reasonable distances.

Educational System

Diocesan and local educational systems evidence the importance of ongoing Christian formation by placing a high visability and insistence on their need. This can be done as we work both with leaders of local communities and with all teachers making this a priority item for both time and budget considerations. Diocesan or local educational systems can arrange for ongoing in-service formation programs in collaboration with colleges. They can sponsor weekends, overnights, days, extended faculty meetings. It is also possible to sponsor pre-service orientation of desired length, for example a week or a weekend. Educational systems can provide video tape and audio tape libraries, especially on topics which are suited to the cognitive objectives.

Parishes

Parishes are centers of spiritual formation for all God's people including teachers. Good Eucharistic liturgies and annual programs of spiritual formation for parishioners also help build up the faith-life of the teachers.

Colleges

Colleges and universities can be very key partners in the process of teacher growth. They can offer a general formation course for undergraduates on "Ministry in the Church". Other helpful courses could be "The Teaching Mission in the Church Today", "The Social Teachings on the Church as a Constitutive Dimension of the Gospel", "General Courses in Theology, Scripture and Christian Life Style". To complement these cognitively-oriented courses, colleges help by providing enriched programs of campus ministry. As partners colleges would offer not only specific experiences designed for future Catholic educators but also Christian formation experience programs for all teachers.

Religious Congregations

Religious Congregations are already adding a significant contribution through providing spiritual renewal centers, houses of prayer, prayer-reflection-action groups, special spiritual activities and service projects. Dialogue with them can bring out additional teacher-oriented programs.

VIII. TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

The teacher is personally responsible for maintaining an openness and commitment to a program of spiritual growth. It is assumed that he/she grows through regular Eucharistic celebration and participates in parish programs of spiritual growth. Occasionally, the teacher may be expected to participate in diocesan or other special

opportunities such as retreats, renewal days, experience weekends, etc. especially designed for educators.

IX. THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Leaders in the local community should be as sensitive as possible to the directions of the Holy Spirit. His ways are beyond our ways. It is God's work and we want to be docile and flexible. Leaders will also want to continue articulating the ideals and fostering the vision of our spiritual growth in Christ, the Teacher.

Motivation of Staff

Appropriate motivation of staff is the leader's most critical challenge. There will always be healthy tension between freedom and acceptance on the one hand and invitation and expectation on the other. It will require patience, faithfulness, and forgiveness on the part of the leader in order to foster internalization and avoid indoctrination. At the same time, the expectation of teacher commitment should be clear, not vague or ambiguous. The leader needs to be valuing, encouraging, supporting and enthusiastic about the efforts of the staff.

It is important to lead teachers to perceive a need for spiritual renewal, personally, as well as for their ministry. As one does this it is advisable to gain agreement and endorsement of the staff as to the priority of Christian formation. The leader might seriously consider beginning with core leaders, opinion setters, and legitimizers in the community. As with all pastoral work, start with where they are and lead them from there. It may be necessary to adopt terminology and modes that are acceptable to a specific group.

Reverence for Persons

Respect and reverence for individuals is important. Each one is unique. God's invitation and our response are something very personal. It should be expected that individuals will grow at different paces, styles and orientations. There is room in the Church for pluralism of theological and ascetical orientations. The style of spirituality suited to lay people may express itself somewhat differently than the style of spirituality lived by the religious. The leader needs lots of patience for conversion and growth takes time. Remember the bumper sticker "Be patient: God isn't finished with me yet." Patience and alertness will be needed also should "clicks" or "in-groups" show themselves.

Advocate of Opportunities

Being an advocate of available opportunities is one of the easier tasks of the leader. Promote activities at home in the family, at school, in the parish, in the diocese, among religious congregations. Be sensitive to appropriate occasions for individual staff members, for example marriage encounters, retreats and cursillo, etc. Remember everything doesn't have to be sponsored by the school or located at the school.

Involvement and Options

The leader should facilitate participation and involvement of teachers in program planning, implementation and evaluation with special attention to felt needs and lots of options. Everybody doesn't have to do everything.

On whose time should these programs take place? During school time? After school? On weekends? Who is expected to pay for them? The School? The teacher? Personally, I believe this responsibility should be shared. For the leader of the school this means that there should be a budgeting of time and finances for spiritual renewal.

The local community leader recruits and screens incoming teachers carefully to select persons with openness and commitment to ongoing spiritual growth. He/she is concerned about spiritual opportunities for spouses of married staff members and facilitates a "welcome" atmosphere between teachers and priests.

As a leader in the school faith community, as well as an advocate of personal spiritual renewal of teachers, the local leader facilitates faculty dialogue and interaction. At the same time, the relationship of the school to the larger parish community recognized and spiritual opportunities are integrated. Remember the witness of the adult believing community in the parish is a significant teacher in the program of the school.

Supervision-Evaluation

What about evaluation? Yes, it is necessary. From time to time it may be necessary to ask whether they feel comfortable as a teacher in a Christian community or whether they would feel more comfortable elsewhere. Rarely will it be necessary to dismiss a teacher on the basis of scandal or a lack of openness to personal spiritual growth. The leader will want to keep necessary personal supervision and evaluation of the Christian formation program at the lowest possible profile. It should be remembered that we are all sinners and the community will need a bias toward forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Leader - A Person of Hope

At all times, the leader will be a person of hope for the new creation. Remembering spiritual growth is primarily a gift, he/she will model the struggle with prayer and growth, recognizing effort, affirming goodness, and accepting momentary setbacks. The author of the letter to the Hebrews says,

> "Let us run with patience to the struggle set before us. To brace up the hands that hang down, to strengthen the tottering knees, and to look towards the author and perfector of faith---JESUS."
> (Heb. 12:1-12)

X. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Spiritual formation of teachers has been identified by the Chief Administrators Department of NCEA as a top goal and priority. Currently there is a special committee of CACE surveying the country trying to gather the most successful approaches and programs. These programs fall into several categories: central office services, additional pastoral ministers to serve faculties and students, resource materials, religious congregation renewal experiences. The National Conference of Directors of Religious Education of the NCEA has published a book on formation of teachers entitled "Hear the Word, Share the Word, Guide Your People."

XI. EMERGING ISSUES

Because of the overview nature of this paper, there is only time for a brief identification of some of the more pressing issues in Christian formation of teachers as I see them.

1. We need an awareness and articulation of the vision and expectations of Christian teachers communicated throughout the educational community.

2. Motivation is vital. We need ways for teachers to perceive the need for personal spiritual formation.

3. What is appropriate tension between invitation and expectation, between voluntary participation and required participation.

4. This is not a mere human program. It is the mystery of grace and the freedom of man's response.

5. In a pluralistic Church today we need to respect individual differences and styles of spirituality.

6. Whose responsibility is it to provide designated programs of Christian formation? Dioceses? Parishes? Local schools? Colleges? Religious congregations?

7. How do we work with beginning teachers and experience teachers at the same time?

8. How do we supervise and evaluate without fostering an orientation toward externals?

9. How do we articulate minimum standards and guarantee fraternal correction and due process without begetting aloofness and alientation?

10. How do we pursue our First Amendment rights in affirming that the private, as well as the professional, lives of teachers are bona fide qualification for their employment?

XII. CONCLUSION: REASONS FOR HOPE

Christ has called us to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. He has invited us to share in His own vocation and mission of teaching the good news. This may all seem very challenging especially when we experience the vastness of the task, and experience our own weakness and powerlessness. Yet our hope is not in our own efforts, but in the promises and power of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. He will give us all that we need to do what He asks of us. The psalmist says He has promised to give us "the finest wheat" and "honey from the rock."

As the bishops said in To Teach As Jesus Did,

> "We face problems; so did those who came before us, and those who will follow. But as Christians we are confident of ultimate success, trusting not in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ, who is at once the inspiration, the content, and the goal of Christian education: 'the way, the truth, and the life.' "